

Namibian community project takes top award

STAFF REPORTER

THE Torra Conservancy in the Kunene Region last night scooped a top environmental prize for its outstanding community efforts in the field of poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation.

The prize was shared by seven communities from around the world and was awarded at a glittering event at the Seventh Convention on Biological Diversity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Drawn from a pool of over 340 total nominations and 26 remarkable finalists, Torra Conservancy joined communities from Mexico, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Brazil and Tanzania in receiving the award.

The Equator Initiative is a United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) prize that is awarded to recognise communities from developing countries in the tropical belt that demonstrate, in practical terms, successful simultaneous efforts to conserve biodiversity and reduce poverty.

This successful community-based conservancy was formed after Namibia's unique conservancy legislation was passed in 1996.

Since then, Torra has established sustainable hunting and ecotourism activities that have earned significant profits for the entire community.

Together with the private sector, they have also founded Damaraland Camp, a luxury tented lodge that has received accolades as an outstanding ecotourism destination.

Damaraland Camp is fully managed and staffed by conservancy residents and has injected N\$1,6 million into the community economy.

As members of the Management Committee, community members monitor wildlife and human activity and ensure that policies for land and wildlife management are locally informed and, ultimately, successful.